

Application No.: 09/271,503

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Docket No.: 325772008700

REMARKS

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The Examiner asserts that claim 19 contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to make and/or use the invention. The Examiner specifically asserts that the first and second stages are not explained in the specification.

Applicants respectfully point out that claim 19 recites first and second states. In the first state, a processing unit is connected to another processing unit. In the second state, a processing unit is connected via a network interface to a network. As seen in Fig. 5, and as described in the specification beginning on page 15, line 2, the image switcher 471 is connected to a plurality of processing units. The electrical processor of the image reader (block 451) is connected to the switch 472, and can either be connected to the Network I/F (block 481) or directly to a different processing unit. The case in which the image reader is connected to the Network I/F corresponds to the second state. The case in which the image reader is connected directly through the image switcher 471 to another processing unit, such as the image forming unit (block 461) corresponds to the first state. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would certainly understand the limitations of claim 19 and how to make and/or use the device claimed therein. Applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-7, 8, 12, 16 and 18 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Tanaka, U.S. Patent No. 4,658,299. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

According to the invention of claim 1, a function block can be connected to another function block directly or to a network. A function block is connected to another function block, for example, when an image processor is used as a stand-alone copy machine, by connecting the scanner section and the print engine in the image processor. An apparatus can have many function blocks. For example, a copy machine can have an image reader and a printing unit and it is possible for a function block from a different apparatus to use the printing function block of the copy machine, so that copy machine serves as a printer for another apparatus.

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In contrast, Tanaka discloses a system in which a plurality of apparatuses are connected to each other via a network. Tanaka does not disclose that a certain function of an apparatus can be shared with another function of a different apparatus. Thus, the features of claim 1 are not taught or suggested by Tanaka.

Independent claims 9 and 16 recite substantially the same features as discussed above in connection with claim 1, and are therefore allowable for the same reasons. The dependent claims are allowable at least due to their respective dependencies. Applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or fees due in connection with this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. (325772008700.)

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
Deborah S. Gladstein

Registration No.: 43,636
MORRISON & FOERSTER LLP
1650 Tysons Blvd, Suite 300
McLean, Virginia 22102
(703) 760-7753

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